

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What are my responsibilities with respect to Alternate Assessment in school year 2013-14?

Because the last administration of the New England Common Assessment (NECAP) will occur this fall, there is no requirement for students to participate in the alternate assessment for reading and math across this school year for AYP purposes. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) will be administered in the spring of 2015 and the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) will be administered as an alternate to that test in the fall of 2014.

The Science NECAP will be administered in the spring of 2014 and students with the most significant disabilities may take the Science VTAAP as an alternate to that assessment beginning this fall (2013).

Although there is no alternate assessment for students in reading and math this year, it is important that teachers use this year to plan for and begin instruction of the Common Core Essential Elements (CCEE) with this population of students. These CCEEs will be assessed on the DLM and embedded in instruction across each school year. It is critical that teachers get to know and understand these learning targets so that students are given the same learning opportunities as their peers: access to the general education curriculum, participation in the general education curriculum, and demonstration of real progress in the general education curriculum.

For specific information about the DLM and/or the Science VTAAP, please go to:  
[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_alternate.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_alternate.html).

### 2. Where can I find the most current resources/information about DLM?

[www.dynamiclearningmaps.org](http://www.dynamiclearningmaps.org) - This is the official website for DLM which provides overview information about the 17 state consortium.

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_alternate.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_alternate.html) - This is the official site for the Vermont Alternate Assessment. Here you will find information on both the reading/math (DLM) and science (VTAAP) alternate assessments for the state.

<http://ve2.vermont.gov/> - This is the official site for the Vermont Education Exchange. This site is designed for Vermont educators as a way of exchanging information. For information related to DLM, you must first sign in and register, and then look for the DLM group. All of the latest and most up-to-date information can be found here including the Common Core Essential Elements, newsletters, and professional development learning modules.

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/field\\_memo.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/field_memo.html) - This weekly field memo is sent out every week from the AOE and contains up-to-date notices about current happenings at the

Agency. This information is sent directly to your email account. Alternate assessment announcements are posted here.

<http://dlmpd.com/clds> - This is the DLM Virtual Community of Practice resource site for teachers. DLM will be providing resources for teachers through this site which includes a blog, discussion threads, and a materials exchange platform.

**3. Where can I find the most current resources/information for the VTAAP Science assessment?**

The NECAP Science assessment will continue to be administered each spring to 99% of our 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students. The Science VTAAP will continue to replace that assessment for those students who are eligible to participate in an alternate assessment. For Science VTAAP Administration Guidelines and forms, please go to:

[http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm\\_alternate/science.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_alternate/science.html).

**4. Since the DLM is not operational until 2014-15, what should I be doing for school year 2013-14?**

The Common Core Essential Elements (CCEE) are specific statements of knowledge and skills that are linked to the grade-level specific expectations in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and specify learning targets for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) consortium developed the Common Core Essential Elements to build a bridge from the content in the Common Core State Standards to expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is important for educators who instruct this population of students to get to know and use these Essential Elements for the purposes of program development. IEPs must be linked to these Essential Elements so that students will receive the appropriate instruction in order to meet the criteria for participation in the alternate assessment. Click here to download the [ELA Essential Elements](#) and/or the [Math Essential Elements](#).

DLM Field Test – Like the SBAC, DLM will be field testing items with students beginning in January 2014. It is expected that all students who are eligible to take an alternate assessment will participate in all three assessment windows. This will have several advantages: students and teachers who participate this year will be more familiar with DLM and the computer-based test delivery system when the assessment becomes operational in 2014-15; teachers who participate have an opportunity to give feedback after every field test. This feedback helps DLM improve the system before it becomes operational; teachers will get to know and understand how the test will work, its features, and what the items will look like when it goes operational. It will also provide a structure for understanding what students will need to learn prior to the testing window and give teachers an opportunity to develop instructional programs around the learning targets (Essential Elements). The schedule for the field test is: January 15<sup>th</sup> – January 31<sup>st</sup>; March 17<sup>th</sup> – April 11<sup>th</sup>; May 1<sup>st</sup> – the end of the school year. As new information becomes available, it will be posted to both the Weekly Field Memo and the AOE Alternate Assessment website.

DLM Professional Development Modules - To help educators understand the Common Core State Standards and their application to students with significant cognitive disabilities, the Dynamic Learning Maps™ consortium has created and will continue to create self-directed learning modules. Each of the interactive modules is short (30-45 minutes on average) and focuses on a single topic. Click here to access the modules: <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/unc/modules.html>.

**5. Where can I find information/support on best practices for academic instruction for SWSD?**

DLM Professional Development Modules - To help educators understand the Common Core State Standards and their application to students with significant cognitive disabilities, the Dynamic Learning Maps™ consortium has created and will continue to create self-directed learning modules. Each of the interactive modules is short (30-45 minutes on average) and focuses on a single topic. Click here to access the modules: <http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/unc/modules.html>.

<http://dlmpd.com/clds> - This is the DLM Virtual Community of Practice resource site for teachers. DLM will be providing resources for teachers through this site which includes a blog, discussion threads, and a materials exchange platform.

<http://www.uvm.edu/~cdci/iteam/> - The Vermont Interdisciplinary Team (I Team) website. The I-Team provides technical assistance to teams of students with intensive needs. This includes working with teams to develop programming for these students based on the Common Core Essential Elements. Please contact them for assistance.

**6. How do I and my students become more familiar with the test prior to it becoming operational in school year 2014-15?**

External Reviewers Needed - The Dynamic Learning Maps™ (DLM) Alternate Assessment Consortium is seeking educators from its partner states to review testlets (sets of 3-5 items) for the new assessments. New assessment testlets are being written for DLM right now. All new testlets need to be reviewed by educators to make sure the items are of high quality and are ready for field testing. Panelists will review items during the 2013-14 academic year. Panelists will review for content and instructional relevance, appropriateness and accessibility for students with significant cognitive disabilities, and freedom from bias and sensitivity. To volunteer as a panelist, complete the [survey](#) at no later than **September 30<sup>th</sup>**. DLM will notify volunteers who are selected to serve no later than November 1. For more information, please go to: <http://bit.ly/1a5x3xb>.

DLM Field Test – Like the SBAC, DLM will be field testing items with students beginning in January 2014. It is the intention of Vermont that all students who are eligible to take an alternate assessment will participate in all three assessment windows. This will have several advantages: students will become familiar with the online assessment and learn how it works best for them; teachers will get to know and understand how the test will work, its features, and what the items will look like when it goes operational. It will also provide a structure for understanding what students will need to learn prior to the testing window. A tentative schedule for the field test is: January 15<sup>th</sup> - February 1<sup>st</sup>; March 17<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup>; May 1<sup>st</sup> – the end of the school year. Very little information is available at this time. As new information becomes available, it will be posted to both the Weekly Field Memo and the AOE Alternate Assessment website.